from it. The young enthusiastic architect would by his exertions and abilities raise himself to honour in his profession, as many have done in days gone by. Bramante was the successful competitor against Giuliano di San Gallo and others, for the church of St. Peter, at Rome; Giovanni da Ponte against Palladio and Scamozzi, for the Rialto Bridge, at Venice; and should we not find splendid and noble ideas in the mind of the aspiring architect of the present day, if his talents were called into requisition; shewing that, in competition, he who submitted the best and most appropriate design, would have the honour of erecting the same, and calling forth the praises of this and future generations, as all bestow upon the magnificent works of the scandalously so-called dark ages.

If *enlightened* committees of the present day be entirely destitute of justice and fairness, let them depute some impartial architect who would not degrade himself by selecting any other than the best design: some encouragement would then be given to the "young aspiring," and much more good would arise to the profession, than entirely "putting down" *architectural competition*.

Trusting you will find room for these few remarks, I remain, your obedient servant,

London, Nov. 18, 1844. T.

[We are glad our correspondent has sent the above communication, which, we think, will tend to strengthen the abhorrence felt by many against the false system of architectural competition. We believe it is pretty generally admitted, in the instances mentioned by our correspondent, corrupt architecture supplanted the more pure, and occasioned the superior artist to give place to the inferior.—Ed.]

BUILDING COMPETITION AND UNPROFESSIONAL JUDGES.

Sir,—There are so many atrocities committed upon the building community, that I think it incumbent upon its members to publish the most glaring acts of injustice that are perpetrated upon them. By pursuing this course some good may be gained. For when sapient committees formed by unprofessional men, parish boards, and the like, find that their ignorance and unfairness may escape beyond the limits of their court-house, or vestry-room, it is probable that fear of exposure, if no worthier motive, may keep their acts within the bounds of toleration.

In your notices of contracts of the 9th inst., there appeared one for "erecting a foot-bridge over the old river at Temple Mills," in St. John's parish, Hackney. Feeling disposed to contract for the work, I obtained the necessary particulars, and attended at the appointed time with my tender, and as the terms required that persons tendering should wait personally upon the Board of Surveyors of Highways, I remained to hear the result. After staying about an hour, the competitors were called in, expecting of course to hear the different amounts, and the selected tender declared, but to our utter astonishment and annoyance we were coolly informed by the chairman that the estimates were so far above what they considered the value of the work, that they had come to the decision of not having it done *at all;* and this decision was made with the proposed surveyor of the works at their elbow, and he, too, the son of a builder, as I understand, brought up in the business.

I beg to furnish you with the amount of my tender, and also the quantities in the work; you will perceive it is a trumpery and insignificant affair, and scarcely worth the trouble of this communication, but it is sufficient to illustrate the system I complain of, and will shew my fellow tradesmen what a doubtful sort of thing is a "Hackney Board of Highway Surveyors," so that in the event of there being any more work advertised for public competition, they may not be so misled as to suppose it will be carried into execution:—

The tender was 194*l.* The quantities are as follow:—

25 ft. 1 ft. by 1 ft. Riga piles, sawn all 100 ft. cube round, and driven from a barge	
Drawing eight piles, forming part of the old bridge	
1½ rods stock brickwork in cement ..	
45 ft. run 1 ft. 2 in. by 9 in. granite coping	
264 ft. cube Memel fir in cambered ribs, braces, &c.	
500 ft. superficial 2½ in. English oak battens, laid and ends rounded	
12 ft. 6 in. cube oak	
16 ft. in No. 8 oak posts	
2 tons 1 cwt. wrought-iron in bolts, plates, spikes, pile, shoes, railing, &c., principal part to be galvanized	
Painting rails and tarring under side of bridge	
Expense of getting a barge to the work, and hire of do., the river not being regularly navigable	
Taking down old bridge, the materials not worth removing	

Now, at this time of the year, the marshes are generally flooded, the water in the old river is very high, and the current very rapid: at the time of inspecting the position of the bridge, the adjoining farms and lands were inundated. This and the out-of-the-way situation of the work must be taken into consideration, and then I submit to you and your readers whether the tender is unreasonable?

I do not pretend to know what this Board of Surveyors of Highways consists of, perhaps the genius of a Telford, or a Walker may exist in as yet undiscerned brilliancy amongst its members, or perhaps the retail acuteness of a grocer or a tallow-chandler may be the ground-work of their professional reputation; but this I do know that the aforesaid Board had *a* surveyor, who most likely made an estimate of the work previous to its being advertised, and who ought to have known that the tenders were not more than the work was worth. If the surveyor did make an estimate he has mislead the Board, and if he did not, the Board had no right to reject the contracts until their correctness had been ascertained.

Under any circumstances I defy it to be proved that the tenders were exorbitant, the case is therefore one of unfairness, indiscretion, and hardship, and one deserving, through the medium of your columns, to be exposed.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

James Knight.

Limehouse, November 20th.

TUDOR ARCHES.

Sir,—"T. L." has shifted his ground from the "Croydon Doorway" to "Groins," and concluded his observations with stating that "an arch struck from four centres *may have* points of preference over elliptical or parabolic curves;" but to what other true curves his "*may have*" is applicable, your readers must conjecture. Cannot "T. L." or any other of your correspondents assign a better reason than a "may have" for architects and builders remaining ignorant of the most beautiful forms, which can be described by simple continuous motion with much more ease than by any approximate method?

I suppose, however, that although "T. L.'s" letter follows mine, he may not have seen the contents of your No. 91 before his observations were written. Be this as it may, I can assure him that the lines for arches in the first and second examples are neither elliptical nor parabolic; and I must beg to differ from him in the statement he makes, in the particular instance alluded to, that the patch-work line delineated from the double centres can correctly represent an elliptical line, and much less those I have shewn. In the example No. II. a gradation from acute to depressed (to use "T. L.'s" own words) is shewn. By the same means, more acute and more depressed, to any degree, may be drawn by simple continuous motion for any purpose in architecture. I have shewn that this principle is applicable for drawing a Tudor arch through three given points.

In reference to "Groins," I beg to refer to the 38th volume of the "Transactions of the Society of Arts," &c. (published in 1821), for my observations and designs for their construction, shewing the true principles for producing true intersections, and some variety for the "play of light and shade," which even the Goths had not arrived at; but had they done so, such examples would have been pointed out for imitation. It will then be seen that the Goths in their first groins did not know how to produce true intersections of the ribs (mouldings of the ribs) at the springing, but that at a later period they did so, when a very great change in their designs was effected, which produced that pleasing effect so much admired. Although they went far in truth, there is room for going farther, and producing still more perfect examples.

True curves and true intersections must in all cases, when understood, be easier of execution and produce more pleasing effects than any patchwork approximations. It will be time enough for me to say more when "T. L.," or some other architect or builder who thinks with him, has pointed out a few examples where imperfect lines "*may have points of preference*" to true curves. I would beg to suggest that any examples for reference would be best in town, and if to arches in public buildings now executing, so much the better.

Not having seen Professor "Willis's" paper, I do not know whether any of his ideas correspond with what I discovered more than thirty years ago, and which, as I have stated, was published by the Society of Arts, &c., more than twenty-three years since. Should you deem my communication to the Society of Arts worthy of your pages, I may possibly add something more, which from more experience and consideration I may be able to do, although I am not aware of any thing in the description and drawings then given that I now wish to have altered. Joseph Jopling.

29, Wimpole-street, 15th Nov. 1844.

"HASSOCK" SANDSTONE.

Sir,—The introduction of a sandstone, from the neighbourhood of Maidstone (provincially called "Hassock"), for inside walling of churches, &c., has induced me to address the following description of it to you.

It is found in all the quarries of Kentish ragstone, alternating in layers with the hard blue limestone, used for building, paving, &c. &c. It is of various thicknesses and texture, from a soft crumbling loose sand to a firm and tolerably hard freestone, which will take a good face, and, if dried before use, stand exposure to weather, as the surface becomes indurated in a few years, and will then resist the action of the elements.

In the Iguanodon Quarry, layers are found nearly three feet in thickness, and are very similar to the beds of upper green sand dug at Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight; in fact, it is a firestone, and appears to make up for absence of upper green sand about Maidstone. I have faced a wharf with it, which has stood the action of frost for three years, and shews but very slight indication of injury from so powerful an agent of destruction. It has been used for foundation-walls in this neighbourhood for many years, and is a most excellent material for that purpose, as the cost is so much less than brick, and it is equally durable. A great quantity is used for "hearth-stones," and probably the term "Hassock" was given to it from that cause.—Yours, &c.,

W. H. Bensted.

[The "*Hassock*" is not only found in layers, but is also very frequently attached to the ragstone, and from not being completely dressed away, generally forms those portions of blocks which seemingly decay rapidly: close examination, however, will generally prove that the loose "Hassock" only has fallen away, leaving the ragstone undecayed.—Ed.]

THE NEW ROYAL EXCHANGE.

Sir,—Allow me to tell your correspondent "Scrutator" that he is altogether mistaken in fancying the remarks on the Royal Exchange, which appeared in *The Herald*, to have been dictated by favouritism in behalf of the architect. I have no reason to entertain any partiality for Mr. Tite, nor do I seek to ingratiate myself with him. I do not even know whether he has seen the remarks; or if he has, he does not know by whom they were written.

I admit that the article touches upon only comparatively few points of criticism; but for that it may be some excuse to say that it was written off-hand for the occasion, without any time being allowed me, and that it was required of me to make it as popular in tone and as free from technicalities as possible. Besides all which, it was necessary that it should not appear to contradict what had been said in the same paper but a few days before on the subject of the building. Yet it must not therefore be imagined that I spoke contrary to my opinion; that I was equally ready to condemn or approve, as might be required of

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